

has occurred to me for this unusual plumage in *Agriocharis ocellata* other than perhaps it may possibly be due to the prehistoric peoples that at one time densely populated this part of Mexico having domesticated these turkeys, and that some of these aborigines, through artificial selection, produced a variety of the species which, in the long years since those times, has again become mixed with the normal birds in nature, and is now reverting to their plumage.

As a rule, the species assumes and passes through its several plumage states with marked regularity and uniformity; and, as a matter of fact, aside from the three specimens above described and a few instances of partial albinism, no other abnormalities, with respect to this species, have come under my observation.

Apart from such a solution, to my mind it would seem that there is either some cause now operative — or in times past has been operative — which, were it discovered, would explain the necessity for this species to assume a less conspicuous plumage than the strikingly brilliant one which at present characterizes it. — PERCY W. SHUFELDT, *Campeche, Mexico*.

**The Passenger Pigeon at the Cincinnati Zoölogical Gardens still living.** — Many readers of Mr. Wells W. Cooke's very interesting and instructive paper, "Saving the Ducks and Geese" (The National Geographic Magazine, Vol. xxiv — Mch. 1913) have read with deep regret the announcement which he makes in reference to the Passenger Pigeon. He writes — "Today this bird is entirely extinct, the last survivor dying in the Zoo at Cincinnati a few days ago." After reading this sad news, I at once wrote Mr. S. A. Stephan, General Manager of the Cincinnati Zoölogical Co., asking for details and was delighted to receive the following reply under date of May 17. "I have your letter of May 16th, and beg to say that our one remaining Passenger Pigeon is still alive and in as good condition as when I wrote you on Oct. 3rd, 1912." — RUTHVEN DEANE, *Chicago, Ill.*

**Nesting of the Barn Owl in Illinois.** — The first authentic set of Barn Owl's eggs for Illinois was taken May 20, 1909, in Champaign County by Guy Day of Sidney. This consisted of nine eggs and was collected in my ten-mile radius.

On April 20, 1913, I collected a second set of six eggs in the same Salt Fork creek bottoms nine miles from Philo. Both Owls were flushed from the cavity of an enormous Sycamore overhanging the creek. — ISAAC E. HESS, *Philo, Ill.*

**An Unusual Malady and Probable Cause of Death in a Toucan** (*Ramphastos carinatus*). — An adult female of this toucan died April 24, 1913, at the establishment of Mr. Edw. S. Schmid of Washington, D. C., who kindly presented me with the specimen the same day. Upon examining its anatomy — an invariable practice of mine with such material before roughing out the skeleton — I found it in fair condition with most

of the general organs healthy. The bird was in the "pin-feather" moult, the ensheathed new feathers of the tail being each about an inch long. Upon removing the skin covering the uropygial gland, I at once observed that the left lobe of that structure was enormously enlarged, and the cause for this was not far to seek. Some superficial inflammation or other at the apex of one of the erupting quill-feathers of the tail on that side had prevented that particular quill from coming out. As it grew, it proceeded to coil upon itself beneath the skin, until two and a half coils had formed, like the coils of the shell of some snails, the transverse diameter of the whole structure being about a centimeter and a half. Apparently the disease was of some standing and the surrounding inflammation, due to the above cause, considerable, which latter — in part at least — may have had its share in causing the death of this bird. Years ago, in my surgical practice, I had a case or two where the hair of the beard in a man behaved in a similar manner, causing an abscess to form which, in one instance, was as large as a hazel nut, the coiled-up hair inside, which gave rise to the trouble, having a length of an inch or more.— R. W. SHUFELDT, *Washington, D. C.*

**Road-runner in Colorado.**— In the third supplement to Cooke's list of Colorado birds (Auk, Oct., 1910, p. 412), there is a record of this species (*Geococcyx californianus*) having been taken at Shawnee (altitude 8125 feet), Platte River, Colo., March 15, 1907.

The following narrative sheds an interesting side light on the possible circumstances bringing about such an unusual record, also giving one an inkling as to what might have occurred in other startling records.

A short time ago the writer was conversing with Mr. A. T. Allen, taxidermist of Denver whose shop he frequently visits, to see if any rare or uncommon birds had been brought in to be mounted. Mr. Allen mentioned the fact that he had mounted a Road-runner which had been brought in to him by Mr. J. W. Price, of Shawnee, Colo., who had shot the bird there on March 15, 1907, this date being a matter of record in Mr. Allen's day book. It seems a fair presumption that the bird recorded by Cooke, and the one just mentioned and mounted by Mr. Allen were one and the same. About a year after Mr. Allen had mounted this particular Road-runner, a customer came into his place of business, and purchased a mounted Road-runner, saying that he lived in the Southwest, where these birds are common, and that it had not occurred to him to take one (alive or mounted) east to show his friends, until he had stopped off on business at Denver, hence his purchase of the mounted bird. Further conversation between this customer and Mr. Allen lead the former to tell Mr. Allen that he had a year previously, spent considerable time in Denver, and at that time had with him a tame Road-runner. He kept this bird with him in Denver some time, and then liberated it "up in Platte Canyon" some time previous to March, 1907.— W. H. BERGTOLD, *Denver, Colo.*